

Community Activities



Introduction to the

Community Activities



In this section, there are six activity planners which include step-by-step directions to enable you to develop fun and successful community-wide nutrition education activities. They are designed to raise awareness and encourage the participants to make food choices for a healthy diet. The directions may be listed week by week, committee by committee, or task by task, based on the type of activity described. Once you decide which activity to do, read the entire plan thoroughly and design your activity based on the local needs and resources of your community.

Use the following activity planners as sample action plans to coordinate the following local community activities:

- ◆ **Project Green Thumb**—grow a community garden.
- ◆ **Community Sharing: Gleaning**—gather produce after the harvest.
- ◆ **Walkin' the Walk**—participate in a 5-mile walk-a-thon.
- ◆ **Food Guide Pyramid Food Drive**—collect non-perishable food items.
- ◆ **Food and Field Olympics**—play food, fun and fitness games.
- ◆ **Passport to the Fabulous World of Food**—participate in a Great Nutrition Adventure!

Project Green Thumb

Grab a hoe or a shovel and let's go start a garden! A great location may be right in a local Team Nutrition school yard—explain the project to the principal and ask his/her permission to use a portion of the school grounds. You may even want to work with the school food service personnel to use products from the garden in a special school lunch, school-wide salad, or food festival.



Use the following information checklist to start a Team Nutrition garden at a local school or local community garden plot:

Materials Needed:

- Planting, growing, and harvesting tools
- Seeds, seedlings, and organic material, such as compost, manure, or peat moss
- Long-handled shovels, hoes, rakes, garden spades, and three-pronged hand cultivators
- Scissors, knives, and containers (baskets, bowls, or cardboard boxes)

WHAT TO DO:

To Join a Community Garden:

Call a local Cooperative Extension Service office, listed under county or state government, to find locations of nearby existing community gardens.

Pick a Spot:

Make sure the vegetable garden gets at least **six hours of sunshine** a day—otherwise the seeds produce plants and leaves and not much food. If the plot chosen doesn't have enough sunshine, try growing vegetables that have leaves such as lettuce. Or try vegetables such as carrots, parsley, chives, or zucchini which need only 4 to 5 hours of daily sun. Keep drainage in mind—a garden needs to drain well, so try to avoid the low spot where puddles form.

How Big Does the Garden Grow?

A big harvest can be gotten from a garden that is only four feet by four feet. You probably don't want a garden bigger than 10 feet by 10 feet unless you don't mind the work!

Plan Your Garden:

Point North. Find the north side of the plot, because that's where the tall plants should go, so they don't shade shorter ones. Stand facing the sunset, **north is the direction to the right**. Plants are grown in rows, so the garden will be a square or rectangle.



Decide What to Plant:

Think about what vegetables to grow and decide on the number of plants needed. Involve the children in this part of the planning process.

Design the Site:

Draw a picture of the garden and plan out what plants will grow in which rows. Figure how far apart the rows should be. Find out how wide the plants will get, add the two widths together and divide by 2. That's how far apart the rows should be. This will make it easier on planting day.

Once the Garden is Designed—Then What?

GET READY!!!!

Test the Soil:

If the soil has not been tested, conduct a soil test. Call a local Cooperative Extension Service office, listed under county or state government, for the name and location of a laboratory to do testing for lead content and soil pH.

What does a soil test tell? A soil test tells two things: (a) lead level of the soil; and (b) whether the soil is *acid* (sour), *alkaline* (sweet), or *neutral* (neither sour nor sweet). Lead is a poison and if it gets into the plants, it will get into the food. Plants will not grow well in soil that is either too acid or too alkaline.

Get the Tools:

Long-handled shovels, gardening spades, spading forks, hoes, and rakes are all excellent tools for beginning a garden. To care for the garden, use hand tools such as 3-pronged hand cultivators, hose and nozzle, and/or watering cans. If the group doesn't have their own garden tools, find someone who has what is needed and ask to borrow the tools. Or check "yard sales" to buy used tools.

GET SET!!!!

Prepare the Soil:

Once the soil is dry enough, dig it and loosen it. Involve children and youth in the process of preparing the soil.

Remove grass and weeds (roots and all). Take the time to do this well.

- ❑ Dig the soil as deep as the blade of the spade and turn the soil. Or, find someone to till the soil with a rototiller.
- ❑ If the soil test showed the soil to be too acid, add limestone (lime); if the soil is too alkaline, add ground agricultural sulfur. Sprinkle either lime or sulfur evenly over the garden soil.
- ❑ Add organic material such as compost, manure, or peat moss. This helps feed the plants and enriches the soil. Spread evenly on top of the turned soil in a layer no deeper than 3 inches.
- ❑ Blend everything using a spading fork, until the soil is so soft that planting can be done with the hands.
- ❑ Rake the soil until the soil is smooth and level, with no hills or holes. This will allow the water to seep down to the roots.

GO!!!!

Ready to Plant:

Children will enjoy accompanying adults on a trip to purchase seeds or seedlings (also called transplants) for the vegetables you intend to plant. Some plants do better if you start with seedlings rather than seeds. Seedlings are the fastest way to grow plants, and the easiest.

- ❑ To identify what you have planted, buy or make stakes, and write the names of the plants on the stakes with a waterproof marker. Save the stakes for later use.
- ❑ Here is another place that children and youth can help.
If seeds are planted: make a shallow straight line (furrow) in the soil with a finger.
- ❑ Put the seeds in the furrow about half an inch apart or as suggested on the seed packaging.
- ❑ When the seeds are in the furrow, squeeze the furrow closed with thumb and finger.
- ❑ Water the soil right after the seeds are planted—water the plants so that the water comes out like a shower.
- ❑ Place the marker stakes in the soil at one end of the row to identify what has been planted.
- ❑ If another kind of plant is planted, check the distance between the rows following your design.



Harvest Time:

Tools for picking the harvest:

- Scissors or knife
- Baskets, bowls, or cardboard boxes

As the vegetables are picked, place them carefully into containers. Put the heavier ones on the bottom so they don't damage lighter vegetables.

- ❑ **If seedlings are planted:** In each row, mark the spot where the plants should go, by poking a hole in the soil using a finger or the end of a pole. Do the entire row at one time.
- ❑ Set each plant in the soil so that it isn't too high or too low but just above the root ball. Cover the root ball with soil and press the soil gently so there are no empty spaces near the roots.
- ❑ Feed the seedlings with a mixture of fertilizer and water. Water each plant once, let the water soak in, and water a second time. Depending on what plants are grown, this feeding may need to be done every two to three weeks. Check with a county Extension agent about how often to fertilize.

WORKING IN THE GARDEN:

Visit the garden daily—check if the garden needs watering, weeding, feeding, and thinning. Make sure to bring the proper tools. Take the children and youth to the garden and have them help care for the plants. Two hours is plenty of time for them to work in the garden at any one time. Children and youth can do weeding, thinning, and harvesting of crops.



Community Sharing: Gleaning

This activity brings together farmers, gardeners, youth, and volunteers in a community-wide event to glean, fruits or vegetables left in fields, gardens, and orchards after the harvest. It is an opportunity to increase awareness about agriculture and food production, food rescue, hunger, and sharing.

Materials Needed:

- Containers for collecting food (e.g., sturdy wooden or plastic [five gallon] baskets or cardboard boxes)
- Harvesting tools (e.g., knives, scissors, hoes)
- Poster board or other sturdy paper and broad tip black pens
- Hammer and nails
- Garbage bags or containers (large size)
- Tables/benches
- Paper drinking cups (8 oz. size)
- Containers of water and hot or cold beverages

Optional:

- Portable toilets



*InfoNote:

Sources of this information are the local or regional library, county or area Extension office and food assistance programs.

WHAT TO DO: Advance Planning

Task 1.

- Establish a committee to plan and coordinate the activity; identify a member of the committee as committee chair or coordinator.

Task 2.

- Develop a plan for carrying out for the activity. Use the Community Activity Planning Checklist to help identify the major functions to include in the plan. Determine the scope of the activity so that recruitment and promotion efforts match the likely amount of gleaning to be done.

Task 3.

- Obtain a copy of a summary of state or federal “good Samaritan laws”* to give to farmers and gardeners who will be asked to participate in the gleaning activity.

Task 4.

- Identify local farmers and gardeners whose farm products can be gleaned. Make a list of these individuals, including their addresses and telephone numbers. Contact them and invite their participation in the activity. As needed, discuss the activity, describe the kind of training to be provided for the volunteer gleaners, and discuss the benefits of the activity for themselves and the community. Obtain their written permission to have their fields, gardens, groves, or orchards gleaned. Ask that they sign a standard release form. Give farmers and gardeners copies of the summary of applicable “good Samaritan laws.”

Task 5.

- Make a list of the farmers and gardeners who agree to participate in this activity.

Task 6.

- Establish date(s) for gleaning activity.

Task 7.

- Contact food banks, shelters for the homeless, or other local facilities to obtain acceptance of donation of fresh produce, and to schedule delivery (site and time).

Task 8.

- Contact local businesses and civic groups and request their involvement with the activity such as providing assistance with transporting the produce to food banks, providing harvesting tools, portable toilets, refreshments, etc. Obtain a written commitment.

Task 9.

- Begin advertising the gleaning activity: prepare and distribute flyers, radio announcements, and/or press releases for announcing and promoting the gleaning activity to the community. Include dates, times, and locations as well as the date and time for the “training session” with the farmer. Where necessary, translate the promotional materials into the languages of local ethnic groups to expand the outreach.

Task 10.

- Alert local civic groups, organizations representing local ethnic groups, and the religious community about the gleaning activity.

Task 11.

- Contact local Team Nutrition schools or the county Extension office to recruit youth in grades 3–5 and 4-Hers as gleaners as well as assistants to help with all aspects of the activity.

WHAT TO DO: One Week before Activity**Task 12.**

- Prepare directions to the farms/gardens/groves/orchards. Prepare tip sheets about correct clothing to be worn while gleaning (i.e., comfort, safety, and protection), safe hand-harvesting techniques, and the kind of harvesting tools needed.

InfoNote:

Include telephone number where interested individuals can call for additional information about the activity. Keep a record of individuals who respond to recruitment efforts.

Task 13.

Farmers participate in “training session” where volunteer gleaners learn more about the activity and the correct way to harvest by hand. Distribute tip sheets on clothing, harvesting tools, and directions to gleaning site at this meeting. Discuss such issues as transportation (e.g., the availability of car pools or buses) and contingency plans (e.g., what to do in case of bad weather or other unforeseen problem). Obtain signature of volunteer gleaners on a standard release form.

Task 14.

Check with food banks, etc., to make sure that they will still accept the food to be gleaned. Confirm delivery sites and times.

WHAT TO DO: Day before Activity**Task 15.**

Mark areas at the gleaning site where volunteers may park.

Task 16.

Prepare and put up signs showing the central meeting spot and directions to gleaning site.

Task 17.

Have youth assist in the setup of collecting and rest areas:

- (a) tables where volunteers get containers for collecting food;
- (b) main deposit area for gleaned food; and
- (c) tables/benches where volunteers obtain water/beverages and take rest breaks.



WHAT TO DO: Day of the Activity**Task 18.**

- Provide cold water and/or other hot or cold beverage and drinking cups.

Task 19.

- Ask gleaners to assemble at a central place at the farm/garden. Welcome the gleaners. The owner of the field and the activity coordinator are good choices to handle this. Review safety/protection/comfort information. Distribute the containers and harvesting tools.

Task 20.

- Involve the media—conduct interviews with volunteer gleaners, farmers, and children. Photograph the volunteers as they pick the produce.

Task 21.

- Have youth help ready the gleaned produce for distribution to the food banks, etc. Encourage volunteer gleaners to take some of the gleaned produce home for their own use.

Task 22.

- Load the produce onto vehicles for transporting to the food banks, etc. Send the delivery trucks on their way!

Task 23.

- Ask volunteers to assist with cleaning up. Close the gleaning activity by thanking the volunteers and field owners.



THINGS TO CONSIDER/POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- ◆ Try to keep the activity to a size that is manageable. Should a large number of volunteers be expected, consider dividing the volunteers into two or three smaller groups and setting a block of time for each to glean the fields. Or use two days to conduct the activity.
- ◆ The time of year will be a factor in the type and temperature of beverages available for volunteers at the gleaning site.
- ◆ If volunteers are instructed to bring their own tools and water, the need for these items to be provided by the Committee and sponsoring groups decreases or is eliminated. Be aware, however, that the “bring your own” approach may decrease the number of volunteers that participate.
- ◆ Appoint several individuals to serve as stewards who assist volunteers to harvest produce correctly.
- ◆ The individuals who actually participate in the gleaning activity may represent a core group from which volunteers for future gleaning activities can be obtained. Some may want to assist with the planning and implementation of a gleaning activity.

SUGGESTED FOLLOW-THROUGH ACTIVITIES:

- ◆ Send community gleaning day photographs to local newspapers.
- ◆ Make telephone calls or send thank you letters and certificates of appreciation to farmers/gardeners, gleaners, individuals who delivered food, committee members, etc., for their participation in the activity.
- ◆ Contact food banks, etc., to learn how food was used. Ask if they would participate in future community gleaning efforts.
- ◆ Convene discussion sessions on topics related to hunger and food needs in the community. The discussions could be “kitchen-table,” “den,” “backyard,” or “Sunday school” events with neighbors, family and friends, or colleagues.
- ◆ Contact volunteers to obtain their suggestions for improving the community gleaning effort. Ask if they would participate in a future gleaning activity, and how they used any produce they received.
- ◆ Help farmers and gardeners share their experience with county and state legislators and leaders from the religious, civic and service communities.



Walkin' the Walk

Put on your walking shoes and come along and join the fun... a 5-mile walk through your neighborhood community!!!

Materials Needed:

- Tables
- Chairs
- Large water dispensers
- Paper cups
- Decorations
- Balloons
- Registration forms
- Pencils or pens
- Cash box
- Petty cash
- First aid kit
- Large outdoor umbrellas
- Signs to mark the route
- Trash bags



WHAT TO DO: Advance Planning

Task 1.

- Establish a committee to plan and coordinate the 5-mile Walk-a-Thon; identify a member of the committee as chairperson or coordinator.

Task 2.

- Develop a plan implementing the Walk-a-Thon in the community. Use the Community Activity Planning Checklist to help identify the major functions to include in the plan and customize the Walk-a-Thon for your community.

Task 3.

- Decide on Walk-a-Thon route and obtain all necessary permits as required by the community. Here are some examples of route types:
 - ◆ “out and back” type which allows people to see everyone else on the way back
 - ◆ “loop” type which allows the participants to choose the distance by the loops completed
 - ◆ “one big loop” type where the beginning is also the end of the route
 - ◆ “straight line” type where the beginning and end are 5 miles apart

Task 4.

- Review community calendars to establish date for the Walk-a-Thon. Set time and date so that it conflicts with few other community-wide events.

Task 5.

- Contact local businesses, civic groups, and community agencies to become partners and/or sponsors.

Task 6.

- Invite local celebrity, educator, and outstanding student to serve as honorary chairs of the activity.

Task 7.

Contact local radio, television, and newspapers to let them know about the Walk-a-Thon.

Task 8.

Invite participation of youth (grades 3–5) and their parents by contacting local Team Nutrition schools or contacting the local county Extension office to involve youth. As needed, explain and describe the Walk-a-Thon and discuss the benefits of the activity for themselves and for the community.

Task 9.

Invite participation of the youth and adult volunteers as “walkers” as well as adult volunteers to handle the support committee logistics on the day of the Walk-a-Thon, for example, registration, water stations, and route monitors.

Task 10.

Review Materials Needed and make additions if necessary. Note what the Planning Committee can supply, what items need to be rented, which things can be donated from community businesses, and what needs to be purchased.

WHAT TO DO: Two Weeks Before Activity**Task 11.**

Have youth volunteers (grades 3–5) help prepare and distribute flyers, radio announcements, etc., for announcing and advertising the Walk-a-Thon in the local community. They can also create a design to mark Walk-a-Thon route which can be duplicated and put up along the 5-mile route the day of the activity.

Task 12.

Have adult volunteers sign-up for specific jobs, such as those mentioned in Task 9, for the day of the Walk-a-Thon.

Task 13.

Encourage participation of youth and adults as “walkers” by telephoning schools, etc., contacted in Task 8 and remind them to advertise or “talk-up” the Walk-a-Thon.

Task 14.

Make sure all supplies have been acquired. The paperwork should be completed for rented items.



WHAT TO DO: Day before the Activity**Task 15.**

Activate system to call adult volunteers to remind them of jobs at the Walk-a-Thon.

Task 16.

Remind local media about the Walk-a-Thon.

WHAT TO DO: Day of the Activity**Task 17.**

Set up route markers and tables, chairs, water dispensers, paper cups, and trash bags along the walk route and at the finish-line area.

Task 18.

Set up registration tables and chairs and put up banner to designate the central registration/sign-in area. Put up decorations. Put registration forms, pens, and cash box on tables.

Task 19.

Welcome the “walkers.” The Walk-a-Thon Committee Chairperson and the celebrity guest are good choices to handle this. Include in the welcome a brief review of the walk route and the locations of water/rest stations.

Task 20.

Assign adult volunteers to designated jobs, such as monitoring the walk route, etc.

Task 21.

Participate in media interviews on local radio, TV, or newspapers.

Task 22.

Youth and adult volunteers help with cleanup. Close the Walk-a-Thon by thanking all volunteers.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Establish a neighborhood walking group. Get together with friends and set up a plan to walk every day or every other day for a mile or two. Build up the miles and keep up the walking for a healthier life style.



SAMPLE NOTICE

NAME OF EVENT: _____ Walk-a-Thon for Better Health
(name of community)

DATE/TIME: Day of week, Month, Day, Year
Registration: 8:30 am–10:00 am
Walk-a-Thon activity begins promptly at 10:00 am and will last until 2:00 pm.

PURPOSE:

- To promote participation in a lifetime of physical activity such as walking.
- To increase awareness of the relationships between nutrition, physical activity, and better health.
- To raise funds to support a local community food distribution to the needy project (optional).

LOGISTICS: The estimated time of the activity will be three and a half hours.
The walk route will be 5 miles, beginning at _____
Street and ending at _____ Street.
Estimated times to complete the 5-mile course:

| | | | |
|------------|---|----------|-------------------|
| “Strivers” | — | 1½ hours | (walking 3.5 mph) |
| “Steppers” | — | 2 hours | (walking 2.5 mph) |
| “Striders” | — | 2½ hours | (walking 1.5 mph) |
| “Pacers” | — | 3¼ hours | (walking 1.0 mph) |

Participants will pay a registration fee and walk the designated course.

REGISTRATION: All walkers must register. The registration fees are \$5.00 for adults, and \$1.00 for children, youth and senior citizens (adults age 65 and over). Register the morning of the Walk-a-Thon.

Honorary Chairpersons: _____, On-Air Radio Personality
_____, High School Principal
_____, National Merit Scholar

SAMPLE: INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION FORM

(name of community)

Walk-a-Thon for Better Health

TO REGISTER, COMPLETE THIS FORM and make check payable to:

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: (H) _____ (W) _____

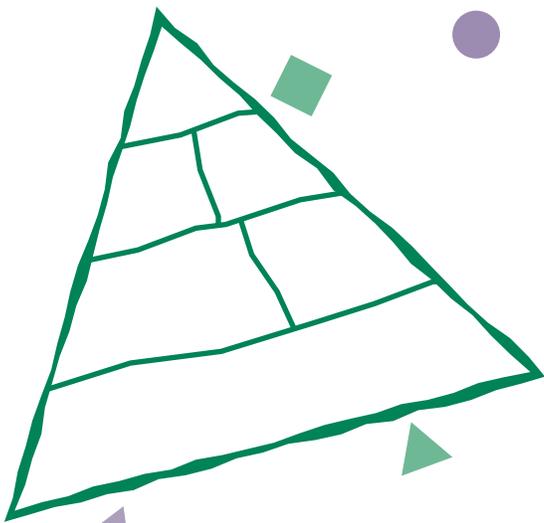
FAX: _____

Please (✓) Check One:

- \$5.00 Registration Fee
- \$1.00 Registration Fee (Senior 65+, children, youth, and students)

Food Guide Pyramid Food Drive

FOLLOW THE CROWD...encourage neighbors and friends to join in! The goal of this community-based activity is to fill grocery bags with non-perishable foods from each of the groups in the Food Guide Pyramid. The food bags are then donated to local food banks or similar food distribution facilities for distribution to people in need.



AT 6–4 WEEKS BEFORE FOOD DRIVE: Action Plan

Getting Started

Establish a small committee to plan and coordinate the food drive. Select a chairperson and committee chairpersons for the following committees:

- ◆ Planning
- ◆ Promotion
- ◆ Collection and assembly
- ◆ Volunteer recruitment
- ◆ Decoration/Food

Develop a plan for carrying out the food drive. Use the Community Activity Planning Checklist to help identify the major functions to include in the plan.

Develop a list of local school district administrators, principals, and teachers (grades 3–5), including their addresses and telephone numbers. Be sure to include the local Team Nutrition schools. Contact them and invite their participation. As needed, discuss the activity, describe the activity, and discuss the benefits of the activity for themselves and the community. You may want to include local businesses in your list.

Develop a one-page flyer describing the activity. Reproduce the flyer and food list for distribution. The food list is included in this kit.

AT 4 WEEKS: Action Plan**Followup**

- Mail flyer and food list to the mailing list contacts and ask for their participation.
- Contact local food banks or other food distribution facilities to obtain acceptance of the donation of non-perishable foods. Set tentative delivery date.
- Keep an ongoing record of schools, teachers, and businesses that are interested in helping with the food drive. (These would be in response to the flyer mailing, so use the mailing list for tracking responses.)
- Check community, school, and church calendars for “open” date(s) for the food drive. The food drive itself will run over a two-week period, the last day or two being devoted to the assembly and delivery of the food bags.
- Discuss plans for publicity.
- Contact schools, community recreational facilities, grocery stores, etc., for donated space for food collection sites.

AT 2 WEEKS: Action Plan

- Contact local businesses and civic groups and request their involvement, such as providing assistance with transporting the food to food banks. Obtain a written commitment.
- Design a flyer to advertise the food drive which includes the list of foods suitable for donation. (Could be a contest with one design being chosen by the planning committee.)

AT 1 WEEK BEFORE 2-WEEK FOOD DRIVE: Action Plan

- Check with food banks to confirm they still want the food donations, and make sure delivery date is OK. Get directions to the food banks as well as parking and unloading instructions.
- Schedule sessions to explain the food drive activity and review the Food Guide Pyramid concepts, etc., with youth participants. Handouts for adult volunteers are developed and distributed.

Youth and adult volunteers commit to participate in the food drive by signing up for the following jobs:

- ◆ Distribution of flyer
- ◆ Bring in donated food
- ◆ Set up major collection site
- ◆ Assemble food bags
- ◆ Load food bags
- ◆ Deliver food bags
- ◆ Help with distribution of food

Distribute food drive flyer throughout the community at supermarkets, places of worship, libraries, schools, etc.

DAY BEFORE 2-WEEK FOOD DRIVE: Action Plan

Activate system to call volunteers to remind them that the food drive is beginning and that they have two weeks to collect food donations.

DURING THE 2-WEEK FOOD DRIVE: Action Plan

Design the Food Guide Pyramid food collection site. Design would include floor lay-out as well as decorations. For example, tape could be put on floor in the outline of a triangle, and tables would be in each food group section for the food. Or, design a giant pyramid wall collage of empty packages of donated foods, and have food group labeled tables set up along the walls for the food.

DAY BEFORE FOOD ASSEMBLY DAY: Action Plan

- Prepare snacks and beverages for youth and adult volunteers.
- Set up registration/information tables at the entrance.
- Set up the Food Guide Pyramid food collection area
 - (a) main deposit area for receiving donated food;
 - (b) tables for holding foods separated into food groups;
 - (c) food bag assembly area;
 - (d) holding area for bagged food prior to loading into delivery vehicles; and
 - (e) tables and chairs where volunteers can relax.

InfoNote:

The first time doing this activity you may want to limit the collection/dropoff site to one location.

As you become more experienced, etc., you may want to expand to include several dropoff sites where donations could then be brought to a central location before taking to the food banks.

Or, you could have several Food Guide Pyramid food drive collection sites where bag assembly and delivery to food banks could occur.

- Place empty food bags on assembly table.
- Mark area in front of collection site for “dropoff” parking while delivering collected food items.
- Put up poster or banner at the entrance to advertise the food drive.

ASSEMBLY DAY: Action Plan

- Welcome the volunteers who are there to receive the donated food, and get it ready it for delivery to the food banks.
- Review traffic control procedures with the traffic person, so things run smoothly during food dropoff.
- Greet food donators at the entrance and explain that they are to deposit food on the main receiving table.
- Volunteer youth and adults separate the food into the food groups, and place on the appropriate food group tables.
- Assemble food bags according to suggestions from the food bank.
- Load the food bags and any extra food items into the vehicles for transporting to the food bank. Call the food bank and let them know estimated arrival time.

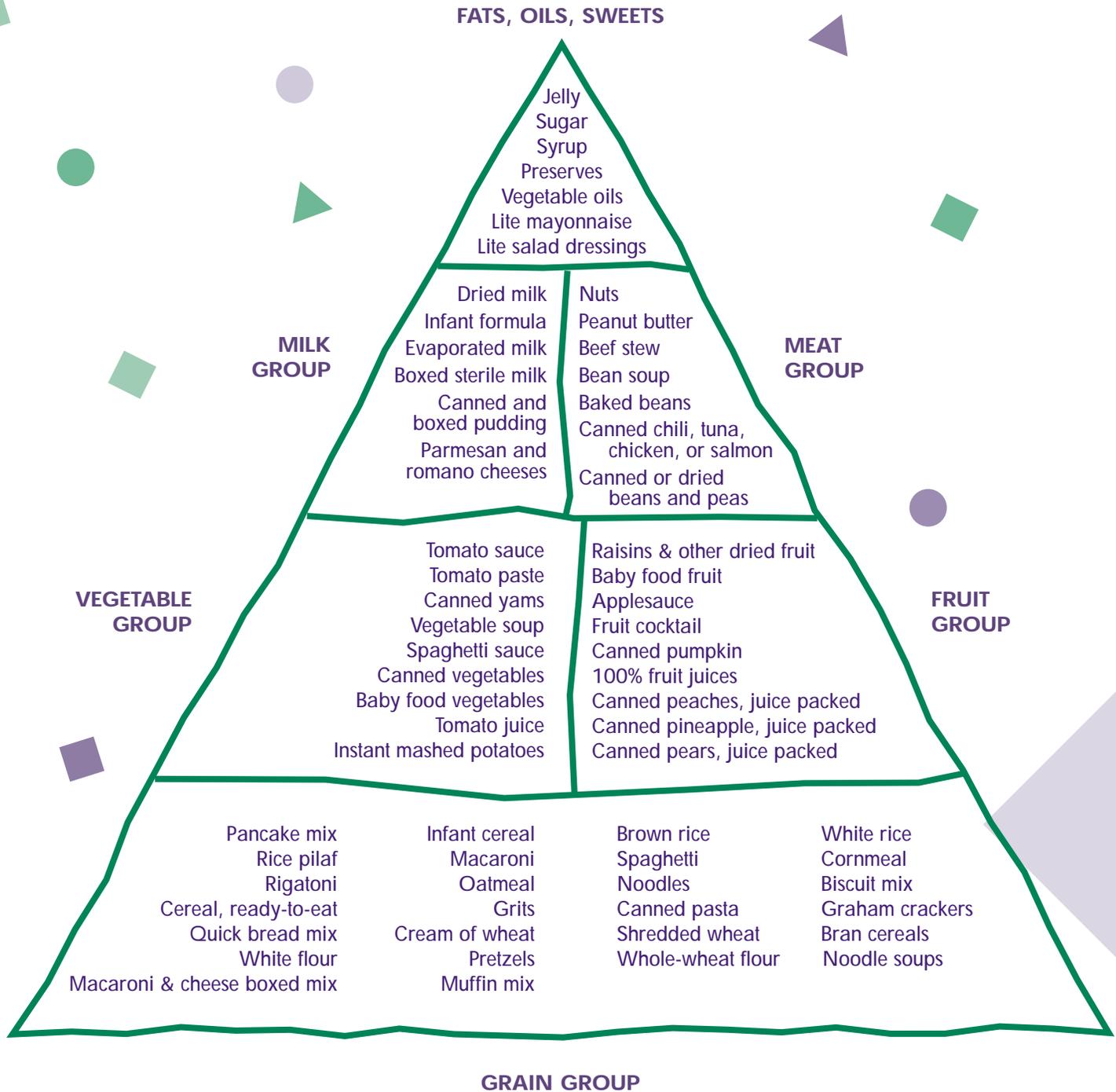
CLOSE-OUT: Action Plan

- Ask volunteers to assist with cleaning up the refreshment, collecting, and loading areas.
- Close the activity by thanking all the volunteers.



FOOD BANK WISH LIST

Use this chart to help you select non-perishable foods for your Community Food Drive. When assembling the food bags, choose at least one food from each food group. (Choose plastic containers rather than glass whenever possible.)



Source: Adapted from Pennsylvania Dietetic Association's Pyramid Power Food Drive (24).

Food and Field Olympics

Take part in a series of physical activity challenges as well as nutrition “brain games” designed to build self-confidence in making food choices for a healthy diet. The Olympic games challenge participants’ fitness and knowledge about the Food Guide Pyramid, the Nutrition Facts Label, and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Balancing the food we eat with physical activity helps us maintain or improve weight as well as keep bodies strong and healthy. Nearly all Americans need to be more active, because an inactive lifestyle is unhealthy.

WHAT TO DO: Advance Planning:

Task 1.

Establish a small committee to coordinate the activity; name a member of the committee as coordinator.

Task 2.

The committee develops a plan for carrying out the activity. Use the Community Activity Planning Checklist to help identify major functions to include in the plan.

Task 3.

Committee members decide which field day events will be used (see description that follows); committee members choose an event or two in which to be in charge.

Task 4.

Establish time and date for field day activity; secure a location for the activity (decide whether to be inside or out) and obtain any necessary approval, etc., in writing. Be sure to include time for setup and cleanup.

Task 5.

Contact local building material companies and supermarkets to seek donations of materials needed to construct some of the field day events.

Task 6.

Prepare flyers, etc., for promoting the field day activity to the community.

Task 7.

Recruit adult and teen volunteers to help set up the Olympic course, supervise each event, help with sign-in, help with food at the finale, and sponsor any awards.

WHAT TO DO: Two Weeks before the Activity

Task 8.

- Begin collecting materials needed to construct the Olympic events.

Task 9.

- Divide teens and adults into groups to work on putting together materials, building, or designing the Olympic event course.

WHAT TO DO: One Week before the Activity:

Task 10.

- Develop and print copies of the Olympic course check sheet for participants. This will be used to help participants keep track of what events they have completed.

Task 11.

- Convene meeting where adult and teen volunteers are instructed on their duties during the field day activity.

Task 12.

- Check progress of Olympic events to assure their readiness for the day before the field day activity.

WHAT TO DO: Day before the Activity:

Task 13.

- Set up event course and signs for each event. (Or set up in early hours of the field day itself.)

Task 14.

- Set up registration table for participants to sign in and receive their Olympic course check sheet.

Task 15.

- Mark parking area with signs.

Task 16.

- Set up table for the “Any Day Is Sundae.” Bring throw-away bowls, plastic spoons, and napkins in amounts sufficient to handle the number of participants and some “extras.”



Pyramid Relay

Materials Needed:

- 20 food pictures that represent the five major food groups of the Food Guide Pyramid (FGP). Food pictures are included in this kit in the “Sandwich Magic” lesson and the “Pyramid Relay” lesson in the Youth Activities Section.
- 12 paper grocery bags, a set of five bags for each relay team plus a “picture bag” for each team. Label each bag in a set with the name of one of the five major food groups.
- Markers
- Masking tape



Preparation:

- Photocopy food pictures, color, and cover with clear contact paper.
- Place the open food group bags 30 feet from starting point. (Relay run requires at least 30 feet from starting line to each set of five food bags.)
- Mark starting line with masking tape.
- Mark off 30 foot relay lanes for runners—using masking tape.
- Set up “picture bags” with pictures of foods beside the starting lines.

WHAT TO DO: Day of the Activity:

Task 17.

- Bring cold water and drinking cups in amounts sufficient to handle the number of participants.

Task 18

- Master of ceremonies (activity coordinator) announces the “Opening of the Olympic Games.”

Task 19.

- Adult and teen volunteers staff each of the events and the snack table where participants create their own sundaes.

Task 20.

- Cleanup by group volunteers who built each event.

Participants check off on their Olympic course check sheet when they have finished a field event and then move on to another. These are suggested field events, and the “Olympics” may include all of them, some of them, or events made up by the committee.

PYRAMID RELAY

Players sort foods into proper Food Guide Pyramid food groups.

To play:

- ◆ Youth line up into two lines (maximum number for each line is 5).
- ◆ At the whistle, the first person in each line reaches into the “picture bag,” takes a food picture, runs the lane to the food bags and drops the picture in the proper food group. The player then runs back to the starting point, hits the hand of the next person in line—that person reaches into the bag, gets a picture, runs the lane, etc., until all in line have run the relay. With 20 food pictures and 10 youth, each should have two chances to run the relay. The line which finishes first with all correct answers wins!

Healthy Hopscotch

Materials needed:

- Chalk
- Beanbags, hopscotch markers, or small flat rocks

Preparation:

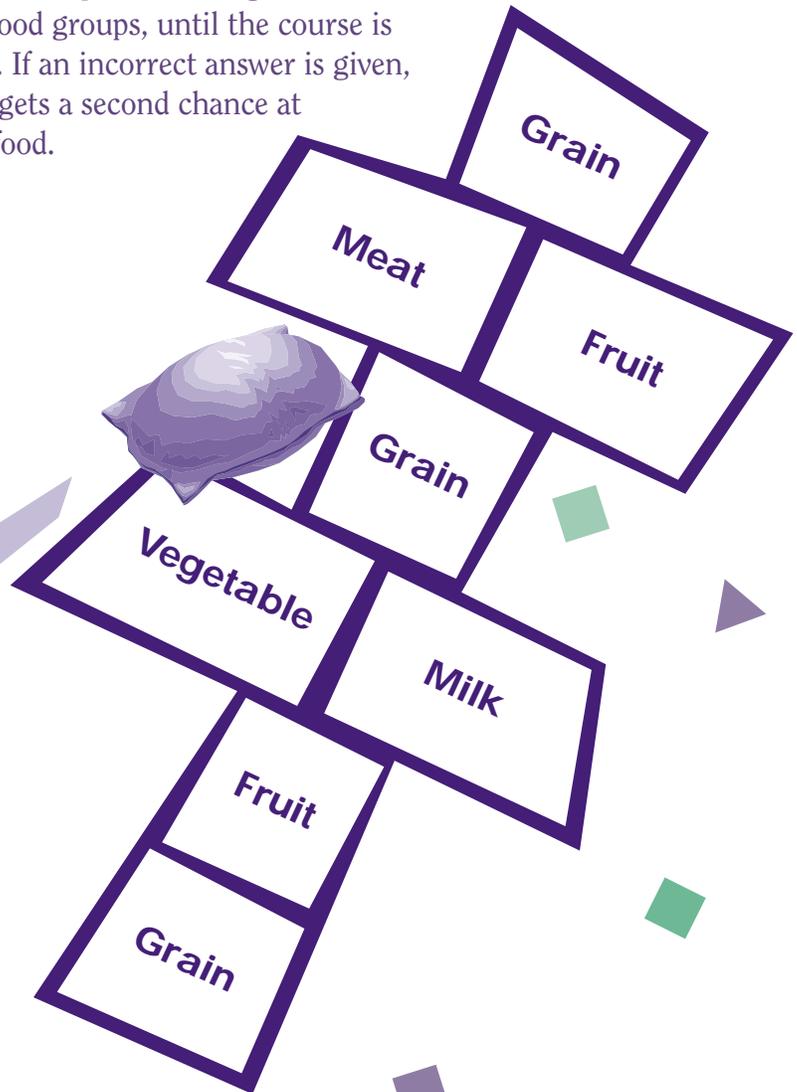
- Draw a hopscotch outline and write in the different food groups.

HEALTHY HOPSCOTCH

Players play hopscotch and name foods from the Food Guide Pyramid food groups (36).

To play:

A player throws the beanbag or hopscotch marker or small flat rock onto the first square. Before the player hops, he/she has to name a food from that food group. The player continues from square to square, naming foods for the indicated food groups, until the course is completed. If an incorrect answer is given, the player gets a second chance at naming a food.



Nutrition Wheel

Materials Needed:

- Cardboard, oaktag board, or sturdy poster board to make the “wheel”
- Sturdy poster board to make game “spinner”
- One paper fastener, prong, $\frac{3}{4}$ ”
- Velcro tape, 1” diameter
- Pictures of foods
Pictures needed: milk, cheese, yogurt, hamburger and bun, grilled chicken, ham slices, whole-wheat bread slices, tomato, carrots, baked potato, tossed salad, green beans, orange, banana, 100% fruit juice, pear, oatmeal raisin cookie
- Table
- Food Guide Pyramid poster

NUTRITION WHEEL

Players choose a lunch which includes foods from at least three of the five major food groups of the Food Guide Pyramid.

Preparation:

- ◆ Make large circle for the “wheel” and make arrow spinner.
- ◆ Attach the spinner to the wheel using the paper fastener.
- ◆ Put small pieces of velcro on the wheel, on the food pictures, and on the Food Guide Pyramid poster.
- ◆ Stick the pictures to the wheel randomly.
- ◆ Set up table to hold game board.
- ◆ Set up Food Guide Pyramid poster (attach to wall or set on a stand).

To play:

Player spins the arrow to point to a food to build a meal for lunch. The player must get 3 foods, each one from a different Food Guide Pyramid food group. As each food is selected, the food is taken off the wheel and placed on the proper food group on the Food Guide Pyramid poster. (This will help the youth keep track of what foods are needed for the meal.) If two players play, they take turns spinning and building their lunches.

NUTRITION FACTS LABEL OLYMPIAD

Players read the Nutrition Facts Label total fat content on food packages. They then line up the packages in order from lowest amount of fat to highest amount.

Preparation:

Set up food packages in random order on a table.

To play:

Player has two minutes to look at the total fat content on the food packages and line them up in order from least to most fat per serving.

Nutrition Facts Label Olympiad

Materials Needed:

- Empty food packages (10+) showing Nutrition Facts Label. You may use similar products such as all cookie packages, or all cracker packages, or all different food products. Just make sure that there is a range in fat content.
- Table at least 6 feet long

Silly Syllable Scramble

Materials Needed:

- “Silly Syllable Scramble” from this kit
- Pencils

Running Around the Pyramid

Materials Needed:

- Masking tape

Favorite Fruit Collage

Materials Needed:

- Crayons or markers
- White paper (8½” x 11”)
- Transparent tape
- Optional: Several large sheets of paper on which to mount the individual pictures when creating the mural/collage

SILLY SYLLABLE SCRAMBLE

Players identify pictures illustrating syllables of foods, and figure out the food and the food group it belongs to.

Preparation:

Photocopy “Silly Syllable Scramble” in sufficient quantity for players to have own copy.

To play:

Players figure out the foods in the word scramble, and write the name of the food and the food group to which it belongs on the sheet provided.

RUNNING AROUND THE PYRAMID

Players run, hop, and skip, to learn the importance of exercise and the importance of a healthy diet.

Preparation:

Mark off outline of the Food Guide Pyramid (each side should be at least 30 feet).

To play:

Each player takes a turn around the Pyramid. From the starting point (bottom right corner), the player **runs** to the tip. Next the player **hops on one foot** from the tip to the bottom left corner. Then the player **skips** from that corner back to the starting point.

FAVORITE FRUIT COLLAGE

Players draw pictures of their favorite fruits. The artwork is put together in a mural/collage for display in a public place, such as a school cafeteria or public library.

Preparation:

Set up work tables.

Distribute paper and markers.

To play:

Players are given paper and markers and they “go to work” being creative!

Great Grain Obstacle

Materials Needed:

- Poster board
- Markers
- See each obstacle listed. You may choose to do all or just a few.

Station 1

Materials Needed:

- Child size sand pail or bucket
- Oats or oatmeal
- 2 pieces of cardboard labeled A and B

Station 2

Materials Needed:

- 10 or more tires

Station 3

Materials Needed:

- Tunnel — seek donation of a plastic or cloth collapsible tunnel from a toy store or use cardboard boxes to make a tunnel.

GREAT GRAIN OBSTACLE

Players run an obstacle course having a grain theme — wheat, corn, oats, rye, and rice are featured.

Preparation:

Make posters to identify each obstacle course station. See descriptions of each obstacle listed below. Decide which ones you want to do.

To play:

Players line up in single file at the starting line.

At the whistle, the first player in line starts down the obstacle course, as the first player completes the first station, the second player begins the course, then the third player, etc., until all players have completed the 7 stations.

THE GREAT GRAIN OBSTACLE COURSE:

STATION 1: Bucket O' Oats

Preparation:

Place the piece of cardboard labeled A and the piece labeled B 20 feet apart, fill pail with oats.

To play:

Player runs from point A to point B and back, carrying a bucket full of oats.

STATION 2: Popcorn Pop and Hop

Preparation:

Place tires in a zigzag pattern.

To play:

Player runs and hops (one leg at a time in each tire) along a zigzag tire course.

STATION 3: Rigatoni Tunnel

Preparation:

Set up tunnel.

To play:

Player crawls through the tunnel as fast as possible.

Station 4**Materials Needed:**

- 6 or 12 boxes of rice
- 3 or 6 balls or bean bags

Station 5**Materials Needed:**

- Several boxes of rye crackers
- Disposable cups
- Container of water
- Napkins
- Table
- Bowl

Station 6**Materials Needed:**

- Several boxes of ready-to-eat cereal
- Disposable bowls
- 1-cup measuring cups
- Table

Station 7**Materials Needed:**

- Broom handle
- 2 chairs

STATION 4: Rice Tumble**Preparation:**

Set up boxes into triangle shape: 3 on bottom, 2 on mid level, and 1 on top.

To play:

Players use a ball or bean bag to knock down the rice boxes.

STATION 5: Whistle through the Rye**Preparation:**

Set up table, put crackers in a bowl or plate, pour water in cups.

To play:

Players eat rye crackers and try to whistle.

STATION 6: Measure to Measure**Preparation:**

Set out cereal, bowls, and measuring cups on table.

To play:

Player pours the amount of ready-to-eat cereal he/she usually eats into a bowl. He/She guesses how much it is, and then pours the cereal from the bowl into a measuring cup to get the “real” measure.

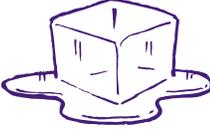
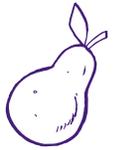
STATION 7: Spaghetti Limbo and Go**Preparation:**

Set up broom handle supported by the chairs.

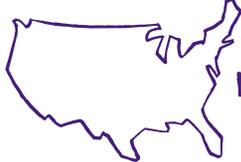
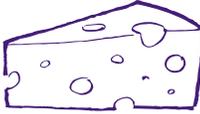
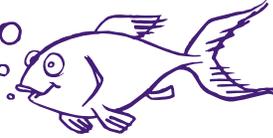
To play:

Player must pass underneath the broom handle and the obstacle course is completed!!!

Silly Syllable Scramble

| | | | | | FOOD | FOOD GROUP | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------|-------|
| 1 |  | + |  | = | _____ | _____ | |
| 2 |  | + |  | = | _____ | _____ | |
| 3 |  | + |  | + |  | = | _____ |
| 4 |  | + |  | + |  | = | _____ |
| 5 |  | + |  | = | _____ | _____ | |
| 6 |  | + |  | = | _____ | _____ | |

1-Eggplant; 2-Ice Cream; 3-Peanut Butter; 4-Spareribs; 5-Bagel; 6-Cottage Cheese

| | | | | | FOOD | | FOOD GROUP |
|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|------------|
| 7 |  | + |  | == | _____ |  | _____ |
| 8 |  | + | N | + |  | == | _____ |
| 9 |  | + | | |  | == | _____ |
| 10 |  | + | | |  | == | _____ |
| 11 |  | + | | |  | == | _____ |
| 12 |  | + | | | eee | == | _____ |
| 13 |  | + | | |  | == | _____ |

7-Cauliflower; 8-American Cheese; 9-Popcorn; 10-Mango; 11-Cracker; 12-Cookie; 13-Shellfish

Passport

To the Fabulous World of Food

Use this activity planner to journey to a world of mouth watering, lip-smacking foods from around the globe. Follow the tasks described below and embark on a journey of a lifetime!



All Aboard

This activity is a community-based tasting party featuring foods from different parts of the world.

WHAT TO DO: Advance Planning

Task 1—Help Wanted

Form a group of volunteers to help plan, organize, and run this activity. The number of volunteers needed depends on the size of the community invited and the number of “tasting stations” or other activities planned.

Task 2—Organize A Planning Meeting

Set up a date, time, and location for a planning meeting and invite potential volunteers.

Task 3—During The Planning Meeting

Schedule activity—list potential locations, date, time, rain-date or alternate indoor site for activity, and community members to invite. Designate one volunteer to secure location and permits for the activity.

Divide volunteers into committees. See sidebar for a list of committees.

Committees

Event Planning Committee
sets time and date, develops plan of action

Food Committee
selects the foods, arranges for the food and chefs

Supplies Committee
arranges for cooking, eating, and cleaning supplies

Volunteer Recruitment and Training Committee
recruits and trains volunteers

Promotion Committee
invites community and media, handles publicity flyers

Decoration Committee
handles decorations and “passport” handout included in this kit

**Note— one member from each committee should make up the event planning committee.*

Task 4 — Committee Assignments:**EVENT PLANNING COMMITTEE****Write the action plan—the action plan should include:**

- List of countries and types of foods to showcase.
- List of volunteer chefs to invite from local international restaurants.
- Select a location, date, time, and rain alternative (designate someone to arrange for the location and obtain permits if needed).
- Determine how the ingredients will be obtained, i.e., donated by chefs or purchased by event sponsors.
- Budget.
- Design a floor plan of the activity site.
- Arrange for trash and area cleanup.

Two Weeks before Activity:

- Double-check on the availability of location, date, and time for the activity.
- Review all plans to be sure they are in place.

FOOD COMMITTEE**Advance Planning:**

- Invite at least 4–6 local chefs from restaurants, culinary schools, or catering businesses to participate. Be sure to get their names, addresses, business phones, and fax numbers. For assistance in locating chefs, check out “The Chef’s Connection—A Directory of Chefs for School Partnerships” included in USDA’s “Great Nutrition Adventure Packet,” or contact the American Culinary Federation, the American Institute of Wine and Food, the James Beard Foundation, or CHEFS from Public Voice for Food and Health Policy.
- Set up meeting to organize chef involvement.
- Send a followup letter and include directions to the meeting.
- Make a followup call to all chefs as a reminder of the day and time of the planning meeting—if there are last minute conflicts or emergencies, ask them to send an assistant or an alternate to the meeting.



Supply List:

- Tables—for registration desk, food stations, and eating
- Chairs—for registration desk, chef, and other volunteers
- Tablecloths—for food stations
- Warming trays
- Cook tops
- Serving utensils
- Plastic ware—knives, spoons, forks, napkins
- Paper plates
- Cups—hot and cold, if needed
- Trash receptacles and bags
- Electric hook-up, extension cords
- Tape
- Markers
- Gloves for handling food

Food Committee Meeting:

- Confirm the date and time for the activity to assure chef involvement.
- Identify each team member's role and contribution.
- Identify a chef coordinator for the activity.
- Discuss and plan a menu that meets the Dietary Guidelines. Be sure the menu is practical, offers something new for the children to try, is healthy, is appetizing, and has eye appeal.
- Discuss with chefs and arrange for transportation of prepared foods to the activity site.
- Discuss food safety.
- Ask chefs for recipes and their biographies and pictures, if possible.
- Be aware that chefs frequently measure by weight, so some conversion may be needed for household use. If providing recipes to parents, guests, and the media make plans to provide a nutrient analysis of the recipes, if possible.

Two Weeks before Activity:

- Review foods selected for the activity to be sure they are representative of the countries being showcased.
- Confirm availability of the chefs and other volunteers.
- Remind chefs to wear their chef hats and uniform.
- Confirm food donations.

Day of Activity:

- Introduce the chefs to other volunteers.
- Assist chefs in setting up food serving areas.
- Present certificates to the chefs.

SUPPLIES COMMITTEE

Advanced Planning:

- Determine supplies needed—see supply list.
- Determine budget for supplies.
- Secure donations, if possible.
- Arrange for transportation of supplies to the site and/or storage of supplies.
- Divide up list among volunteers.

Two Weeks before Activity:

- Check that supplies have been ordered and are due to arrive.
- Check on delivery and storage of supplies.

Day of Activity:

- Set up supplies.

Following the Activity:

- Return supplies that were borrowed or rented.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING COMMITTEE**Advance Planning:**

- Determine how many volunteers are needed.
- Call volunteers and recruit; discuss time involvement, possible food donations.

Two Weeks before Activity:

- Conduct a meeting with the volunteers.
- Develop a plan to best utilize the volunteers.

One Day before Activity:

- Confirm availability of volunteers.
- Hand out volunteer assignments.

PROMOTION COMMITTEE**Advanced Planning:**

- Develop a media plan to invite local media to cover the activity—use the attached media plan as a guide.
- Develop or obtain media list.
- Develop and send out formal invitations to important community leaders and the media.
- Develop a flyer announcing the activity.

Two Weeks before Activity:

- Call to confirm on media availability.

Day of Activity:

- Have a volunteer or committee representative sign in the media guests.

Following the Activity:

- Collect newspaper clippings about the activity.
- Send thank you notes to all chefs, volunteers, the media, etc.

DECORATION COMMITTEE**Advance Planning:**

- Research the different countries selected to plan decorations.
- Set budget as necessary.
- Collect materials for the decorations.
- Collect posters or pictures.
- Copy the “passport” provided in this activity planner. Make enough for each participant to have one to use during this activity.
- Arrange for stamp pads, ink, and stamps.
- Instant camera (optional).
- Handouts (optional).
- Prepare certificates for chefs and other volunteers.

One Week before Activity:

- Check on the decorations.
- Make or assemble any decorations as necessary.

Day before Activity:

- Post signs.
- Decorate the site.

Day of Activity:

- Set out handouts.
- Clean up.

PASSPORT



PASSPORT



MEDIA PLAN CHECKLIST

MAKE CONTACT

- Collect basic information on who's who in the media including local radio, TV, daily, weekly and monthly newspapers, and local and regional magazines.
- Check out content and style of programs, specialized columns.
- Identify ethnic and specialized publications in the community.

KNOW YOUR MEDIA

- Get to know the reporters and editors.
- Know who covers what "beat"—education, schools, food, health, nutrition, chefs, and restaurants.
- Call local newsrooms.
- Note who has covered community events in the past.

RESEARCH OTHER MEDIA SOURCES

- Ask chefs which writers may have covered them in the past and if they have their own publicist.
- Keep a clipping file of stories from publications that have articles on food, health/nutrition, schools, education, chefs, communities, etc.
- Use the *News Media Yellow Book* (available at most public libraries) and other library resources.
- Contact print media that needs longer lead time—monthly magazines and publications.

ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MEDIA

- Designate specific spokesperson(s) to talk to the media.
- Contact assignment editors.
- Develop your press release and teaser.

PRESS RELEASE

- Tell who, what, where, when, how, and why as clearly and concisely as possible.
- Think of who the audience is and what would appeal to them.
- Try to keep to one page.
- Be creative and innovative—make it stand out from the others.
- Include title, date, and location.
- Include a contact person and phone number for further information.

TEASER

- Develop a creative media attention getter.

MAIL PRESS RELEASE AND TEASER

- Find out who is the right person to fax, mail, or e-mail press releases, background information, and "teasers" to. Faxing is usually the best way.
- Ask to speak to that person to establish a personal contact and to get them interested in the upcoming activity.
- If contact can not be made on the telephone, then fax or mail an introductory letter. Set up a personal meeting, if necessary.

QUESTIONS FOR THE MEDIA

- Name, media outlet, phone/fax numbers.
- Deadline for publication or broadcast AND when the story will run.
- Encourage a photographer or camera crew to accompany the reporter.
- Find out if the outlet has a special angle to cover on the event.
- Fax information to them.

ASSEMBLE THE MEDIA KIT

- Include press release, biographies/photos of chefs, and chef recipes.
- Provide reporters with media kit as soon as possible.
- Designate a photographer.

REACH OUT

- Contact reporters to remind them of the activity two or three days in advance.

LAST MINUTE

- Telephone media contacts to remind them of the activity the day before.
- If the media contact is unable to attend, make sure to get followup materials and photos to them.
- Be sure to have all press attendees sign in; give them a map of the activity.
- Capture addresses, phone numbers, and affiliation.
- Keep track of all media attended and interested parties who were unable to attend the event and who may do a followup story.
- Assign a guide to direct media to activities.

FOLLOWUP

- Collect all newspaper articles written; ask media outlets for copies of their story.
- Evaluate the event. Take notes as to what might be done next time.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITY PLANNING CHECKLIST

PLANNING

- Establish a committee.
- Develop a plan.
- Create a theme.
- Determine size of activity.
- Establish dates and times.

BUDGET

- Develop budget using estimates obtained from vendors and others who have conducted similar activities.
- Solicit in-kind contributions from local businesses, civic groups, agencies (if needed).

PARTNERSHIPS

- Involve businesses and Team Nutrition schools.
- Work with area or local Extension office.

RECRUITMENT

- Recruit volunteers from local Team Nutrition schools, civic organizations, and religious institutions.
- Make record of names, addresses, and telephone numbers of volunteers.
- Make reminder calls.

INSURANCE

- Obtain liability or other insurance needed to cover the activity, if needed.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

- Make arrangements with local provider.

SPECIAL PERMITS

- Obtain applications from local government (if needed) and submit.

CONTINGENCY PLANS

- Select an alternative date in case of bad weather.

EQUIPMENT

- Identify and make a list of all materials and equipment needed. See each community activity for specific items.
- Solicit items from local businesses and other community groups, if needed.

TRANSPORTATION

- Determine need and make arrangements with local bus company, businesses, or civic and religious groups.
- Determine parking needs.
- Mark space available for parking.

SIGNS

- Determine type and number of signs needed and prepare.
- Post signs.

PROMO MATERIALS

- Identify and list the informational and promotional materials needed, such as flyers, maps, directions, public service announcements, press releases, etc.
- Prepare and photocopy materials.
- Distribute materials.

PROMOTION

- Contact local editors/columnists, popular disc jockeys, radio/TV announcers and talk show hosts, community leaders.
- Develop/distribute press kits.
- Hold press conference.
- Make presentations at local Team Nutrition schools, churches, temples, mosques, etc.

FOOD/REFRESHMENT

- Determine food and beverage needs.
- Identify providers and arrange for delivery.
- Obtain paper goods (napkins, plates, drinking cups, plastic utensils).

ACTIVITY SETUP

- Set up refreshment, collection and loading areas at site, etc.
- Clean up.